



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE UNITED STATES AND THE ABORTIVE ARMED NEUTRALITY OF 1794

ASIDE from the great issues between the belligerents, nothing has been more strongly forced upon international attention by the present war than the increasingly difficult position in which neutral states find themselves between the two groups of antagonists reeling at grips across the face of the world. Economic, national, and imperial interests have impelled the great belligerents to form their own systems for the preservation of their lives; only when a neutral is able to present power behind its behests are the mighty combatants of world wars likely to depart enough from their own considerations to give heed to its demands. The history of American neutrality from 1914 to 1917 will remain one of the greatest illustrations of this fact.

On two familiar occasions in the past, neutral nations who have seen their interests injured and unheeded by belligerents in world wars have adopted a joint defense by threat of armed force as a means of obtaining what they deemed their rights, short of actually entering war. Such a combination has been successful according to the degree of force that has been behind it, and according to the degree in which the interests of the united neutrals have coincided.

In the First Armed Neutrality, of 1780-1783, to which the United States was a party, the alliance of neutrals to enforce enlightened principles of international law was sufficiently numerous, sufficiently unified in interests, and sufficiently strong to force Great Britain to much greater prudence, and to a mitigation of the severity of her prize laws.<sup>1</sup> It constituted one element in the forces balancing against the United Kingdom that induced British statesmen to come to terms with America.<sup>2</sup> The Second Armed Neutrality, of 1800, including Sweden, Denmark, Russia, and Prussia, was not strong enough to prevent the collapse of Denmark under the guns of Nelson. Skillful British diplomacy playing on the divergent interests of the neutral allies, the bombardment of Copenhagen, and the death of the Tsar Paul, shattered that neutral combination before it attained sufficient momentum to influence materially the naval policy of Great Britain.

<sup>1</sup> Kleen, *Lois et Usages de la Neutralité*, I. 20 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Van Tyne, *American Revolution*, p. 328.

Not much mention has ever been made of the beginnings of another armed neutrality that threatened British naval control in a manner equally dangerous, in the year 1794. It is interesting to students of American history, because the relation of the United States to it shows how the action of small belligerents in the face of all-powerful opponents is dictated thoroughly by the interests of self-preservation, just as deviations from accepted principles of international law on the part of great belligerents are frequently dictated—and always explained—by the same motives. It is interesting, again, because the decision then taken by the government of the United States to abstain from such an alliance, and to acquiesce in the principal British interpretations of sea law, marks the first conscious and official embarkation on a policy which remained the pole-star of American foreign relations until the vastly altered conditions of 1917—the policy of abstention from entangling alliances.

Great Britain's entrance, in February, 1793, into the European conflagration precipitated by the French Revolution, extended that great conflict of political antagonisms beyond the marches and countermarches of Continental armies. Republican legions of France successfully met the threat of Pillnitz and the manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick, but the regenerated vigor of revolutionary warfare found indomitable opposition in the British sea power and the controlling diplomacy that worked hand in hand with it. To sweep the tricolor from the seas, and by choking the commerce of France so to impede the effectiveness of her armies as to force them to yield to those of the Coalition, was the policy of Great Britain. With the development of this maritime policy neutral nations saw themselves seriously injured by the increasingly arbitrary Orders in Council and the wholly one-sided decisions of the admiralty courts. Great Britain did not propose for one minute that the protection of a neutral flag should nullify her naval might.

Though strong, British sea power was not at the beginning of the war omnipotent. The diplomacy of Downing Street was therefore directed in the spring and summer of 1794 toward bolstering by treaties and alliances the naval power of the empire. First fruit of this masterful foreign policy was the treaty with Russia, in which both powers agreed to stop all exports of military supplies or provisions to French ports and frankly acknowledged the purpose of taking "all other measures for injuring the commerce of France" and preventing neutrals from giving protection to it on the high seas. In quick succession there followed a series of measures of like consequence. Spain acceded to a similar arrangement on May 25. The

first Orders in Council came, June 8, to bring into British harbors all provisions found on board neutral ships bound for French ports, whether these ports were blockaded or not.<sup>3</sup> The Two Sicilies (July 12), Prussia (July 14), Austria (August 30), and Portugal (September 26) acknowledged in treaties with Great Britain the same determination to annihilate the commerce of the new republic.<sup>4</sup> French armies withstood valiantly the blows of Europe armed against them. The reborn vigor that never fails France delivered counter-strokes of more than equal weight. Yet the rulers of the Revolution saw the British naval-diplomatic system engulfing the principal monarchies of Europe, and British fighting vessels everywhere threatening arbitrary control of all other powers.

France by the autumn of 1793 saw herself almost completely encircled by the constricting coils of the power that controls the sea. The diplomatic representatives of Russia and Great Britain had informed the monarchs of Sweden and Denmark that British and Russian fleets would be stationed in the Baltic and North seas to stop all kinds of provisions bound for France under whatever flag.<sup>5</sup> If the plan were carried out successfully, the English had succeeded in blocking the Baltic to France by extending contraband to cover not only naval-store products of that region, so necessary to the French navy, but the great supplies of food that the Swedes and Danes sent through the Sounds to the impoverished republic. The same prohibitions confronted vessels from America. They were forced to land their masts and barrels of tar and pitch on British wharves, and to empty their cargoes of grain into the bins of British warehouses. Except for the Baltic Scandinavian ports, a few Italian harbors, and the cities of the Levant, all Europe and America, as a result of the British system, was closing to the ships of the new republican flag.

<sup>3</sup> "That it shall be lawful to stop and detain all vessels loaded wholly or in part with corn, flour, or meal, bound to any port of France, or any port occupied by the armies of France, and to send them to such ports as shall be convenient, in order that such corn, meal, or flour may be purchased on behalf of His Majesty's Government, and the ships be released after such purchase, and after a due allowance for freight, or that the masters of such ships, on giving due security, to be approved by the court of admiralty, be permitted to proceed to dispose of their cargoes of corn, meal, or flour, in the ports of any country in amity with His Majesty." *Amer. State Papers, For. Rel.*, I. 240.

<sup>4</sup> For text of these treaties see *Am. State Papers, For. Rel.*, I. 243 (for Russia); for Prussia, Austria, Spain, the Two Sicilies, and Portugal, see *Parliamentary History*, XXX. 1053-1058. Portugal and the Two Sicilies, however, did not accept the provision concerning neutrals.

<sup>5</sup> For text of notes see *Annual Register*, 1794, p. 241.

Among those nations still upholding the more liberal interpretations of international law lingering from the First Armed Neutrality remained only Sweden, Denmark, feeble Poland (now already slipping into the grasp of the three partitioners), and Turkey. The United States, to be sure, had incorporated these principles in its first treaties and had made formal protest against the Orders in Council of June 8;<sup>6</sup> but the protests were fortified only by paragraphs from Pufendorf and Vattel. The relentless pressure of naval power had made them only perfunctory. The British ministry had been careful to feel out the attitude of the American administration toward any such proceeding before the Orders were issued. Alexander Hamilton, the most influential and cogent of the advisers of Washington, for five years had been in confidential communication with the British minister, George Hammond, and with Major George Beckwith, in an informal sense his predecessor.<sup>7</sup> He quietly assured Hammond that he saw the justice behind the Orders in Council, though he was not able to answer for the opinions of his colleagues.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the British Foreign Office paid only polite attention to the protests penned so assiduously by Jefferson, secretary of state.<sup>9</sup> Even along the thinly populated shores of the coast of northern Africa the pressure made itself felt; there lurked the sea-harpies of the Mediterranean, the Barbary pirates, whose corsairs, released by British mediation from a war with Portugal,<sup>10</sup> were free to prey on such French vessels as might slip past hostile cruisers on the voyage to Venice and the Levant. Both in the old and in the new world the remorseless force of the enemy's sea power threatened to strangle the commercial life of France.

With this aggressive diplomatic and naval system threatening to neutralize all the valor of the armies of France, the revolutionary executives strove to achieve some effective opposing combination. There was one obvious possibility. Encroachments and restrictions on neutral trade struck vitally at the prosperity of the Scandinavian

<sup>6</sup> *Am. State Pap., For. Rel.*, I. 241, 449-454.

<sup>7</sup> The confidential relations of Hamilton with the British representatives at Philadelphia may be seen clearly in the correspondence of those representatives with the Foreign Office. See Record Office, Foreign Office, America, ser. 4, vol. 12 for Beckwith correspondence; vols. 13-16 for Hammond correspondence.

<sup>8</sup> Hammond to Grenville, Philadelphia, May 17, 1793. R. O., F. O., ser. 5, vol. 1. Where there is not specifically mentioned in these notes the name of some other state, in parenthesis, it is to be understood that citations of these volumes of Foreign Office Correspondence refer to America. Record Office, Foreign Office Papers, is abbreviated as R. O., F. O. See *List of Indexes to Foreign Office Records* (London, 1914).

<sup>9</sup> Grenville to Hammond, January 11, 1794. R. O., F. O., ser. 5, vol. 4.

<sup>10</sup> *Am. State Pap., For. Rel.*, I. 288.

nations, whose flags in war-times obviously would cover great profits, but who depended even in times of peace on the business of the carrying trade. They followed that impulse which is almost an instinct with small nations that have large merchant marines but small fighting navies. The two northern monarchies, whose interests led them to adopt more liberal principles of the law of nations, protested vigorously against the British provision order. Their protest brought nothing but chagrin. Neither kingdom could undertake resistance by force. Sweden, lacking funds to equip a half-dozen ships-of-the-line, had the dangerous Finnish and Pomeranian frontiers and little real strength to guard them. Denmark was clamped in a vice, the jaws of which were the British and Russian navies.

French diplomats, however, saw in the Baltic a chance to offset the system of the English. It consisted in resurrecting the armed neutrality of the previous war. Soon after matters had begun to adjust themselves to British participation in the conflict, a French agent had accompanied to Stockholm the Baron de Staël, Swedish minister in France, in an effort to induce the two powers of the north to unite in a new armed neutrality. But the Regent of Sweden—with an eye always to his threatened frontiers—had desired a permanent alliance; and France, already launched on the successful campaign of 1793, did not regard with much enthusiasm the few equivalents which Sweden, diplomatically and geographically isolated, could offer for such an alliance.<sup>11</sup>

These early negotiations withered away, but the French continued to give sharp attention to the Baltic and to the possibility of concerted action by Sweden and Denmark in the face of England. A French agent, Philippe de Grouvelle, was vested with the powers of minister plenipotentiary in the summer of 1793 and sent to Copenhagen as representative of the French republic. He had instructions to keep Denmark and Sweden united diplomatically in defense of their neutral rights as interpreted by themselves, and if possible to stimulate the two courts to a real joint alliance in favor of France.<sup>12</sup> Grouvelle soon found that France had a common grievance with the Baltic Powers because of the British and Russian notes, above referred to, and he had no difficulty in establishing himself on the most friendly terms with the Count von Bernstorff, royal Danish chancellor.<sup>13</sup> In the face of the monarchs allied against

<sup>11</sup> Rapport au Comité de Salut Public, Suède et Dannemarck, 16 Floréal, an II. (May 5, 1794). Archives des Affaires Étrangères, Suède, vol. 286, pp. 224-227.

<sup>12</sup> Grouvelle au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Copenhagen, September 10, 1793. Arch. Aff. Étrang., Dannemarck, vol. 169, p. 245.

<sup>13</sup> Grouvelle au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Hamburg, August 14, 1793. *Ibid.*, vol. 169, p. 213.

France, Bernstorff did not quite dare to receive Grouvelle as the official representative of the revolutionary French republic.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, he had frequent and intimate conferences with him and for all practical purposes Grouvelle had the status and influence of French ambassador. He made arrangements for the quicker and more lucrative disposal of French prizes brought into Norwegian harbors, brought forward proposals for a new commercial treaty, supplied the Committee of Public Safety with such information as he had gleaned from the chancellor concerning the belligerent courts—then, as now, neutral Denmark was a great clearing-house for European war news, and Bernstorff was best informed of all diplomats—and above all pushed his proposals for joint armed neutrality of Sweden and Denmark.<sup>15</sup>

Bernstorff asserted to Grouvelle that complete confidence and unanimity as to policy prevailed between Denmark and Sweden, but refused to make any definite promises.<sup>16</sup> He said that such a proposal for a joint armament had been made by Denmark to Sweden. It was soon hinted by Erenheim, Swedish minister at Copenhagen, that Sweden's delay in preparing any armament to be used in possible co-operation with Denmark was due to poverty—a French subsidy to help Sweden to maintain her armed neutrality would be useful and proper.<sup>17</sup> The French Minister of Foreign Affairs thought such an investment unwise on the ground that commercial privileges offered by France would be sufficient stimulus for such an armed neutrality; the interest of Denmark and Sweden, Grouvelle was instructed,<sup>18</sup> would be sufficient to induce them to combine forces against Russia and England. Grouvelle wrote back that though apparently steps were being taken by the Scandinavians to preserve neutrality by separate action, he did not think such inducements would suffice to maintain a joint alliance.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile plans were being made in Paris to expand the possibilities of a Baltic armed neutrality into a grandiose combination. There is a memorandum of the plan in the library of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Committee of Public Safety

<sup>14</sup> Same to same. *Ibid.*, pp. 394, 427, 428.

<sup>15</sup> Same to same (no. 18), Copenhagen, 11 Nivôse, an II. (December 31, 1793). *Ibid.*, p. 476.

<sup>16</sup> Grouvelle au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Copenhagen, September 3, 1793. *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>17</sup> Same to same, Copenhagen, October 1, 1793. *Ibid.*, p. 270.

<sup>18</sup> Deforgues, ministre des Affaires Étrangères, à Grouvelle, Paris, November 13, 1793. *Ibid.*, p. 347.

<sup>19</sup> Grouvelle au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Copenhagen, December 17, 1793. *Ibid.*, p. 345.

elaborated the early approaches to Sweden and Grouvelle's diplomacy into an ambitious design to strengthen the European influence of the revolutionary government, already stiffened into some coherence by the victories of 1793. The project was to unite all remaining neutral naval states about the French revolutionary executive in resistance to British sea power. It included Sweden, Denmark, Turkey, Poland, Venice, Genoa, and the United States. Singly these nations saw themselves powerless to enforce what they considered to be principles of fairness toward neutral flags. Together they might be strong enough to revive the power of the armed neutrality of the last war. The foundation of the League, reads this interesting document, was to be "the indefeasible rights and independence of these nations and their immediate interests".

As a *foyer* for this "counter-coalition", so formidable on paper, and really pregnant with powerful possibilities, the committee selected the Scandinavian courts. The monarchies were to enter a joint defensive alliance to assert the principles of armed neutrality against all naval aggressions. France would offer peculiar commercial advantages to the armed neutrals, and on actual signature of a treaty she would engage to furnish 6,000,000 *livres*, in addition to 500,000 *livres* for each vessel of the line fully equipped and 300,000 *livres* for each frigate.

The committee had drawn up instructions accordingly and had appointed proper diplomatic agents for the affair, when there arrived in Paris a copy of a convention<sup>20</sup> already signed by Sweden and Denmark and setting forth in a timorous way the armed neutrality principles. This treaty, signed secretly on March 27, 1794, was for the duration of the war. The two northern powers agreed to furnish a joint armament of sixteen ships-of-the-line to protect their subjects in the exercise of rights sanctioned by law and indisputably to be enjoyed by independent nations. The Baltic was to be closed to the war-vessels of belligerent nations, and to be free, therefore, from rules of war. Faltering protection against illegal interference with their rightful commerce by the immense British and Russian naval forces was provided as follows: the neutral allies would make reprisals in concert after all other means of dissuasion had been rejected, and "at the latest, four months after the rejection of their behests, whenever such reprisals should be deemed suitable, the

<sup>20</sup> "Projet d'Arrêté du Comité de Salut Public", undated. It was never carried out. Adet, former minister to the United States, was nominated. It is indorsed "N'a pas eu lieu". Arch. Aff. Étrang., Dannemarck, vol. 170, p. 85. See also "Rapport au Comité de Salut Public, Suède et Dannemarck", Arch. Aff. Étrang., Suède, vol. 286, p. 225, *verso*. This document enables one to fix the date of the *Projet*.

Baltic always excepted". In no specific form were the rights of neutral nations defined; definition was to be covered by the treaty interpretations of the Baltic Powers<sup>21</sup>—the principles of the First Armed Neutrality. The lack of resolute provision for energetic action made the convention at best a weak one. "It is a demonstration of a force and temper which do not exist", wrote the observing Gouverneur Morris from France.<sup>22</sup>

Half-hearted as this instrument may have been, it was a good beginning for the plans then being formulated in Paris. The instructions already drawn up were dropped, for what they aimed to accomplish in the first place had been attained. The Swedes had been indiscreet enough to close the convention door before the French-subsidy horse had been led in—unwisely they had asked for money after the treaty had been signed and made known.<sup>23</sup> At one time the committee had decided to advance substantial funds to accelerate the Swedish armament,<sup>24</sup> but Grouvelle wrote that it seemed probable that Sweden herself might afford the initial expenses of armament,<sup>25</sup> and the money-chest of the revolutionary executive was notoriously hollow. The advances were never made. The failure of the French subsidy, the threatening presence in the Baltic and North seas of Russian and British fleets, and one other factor smothered the infant armed neutrality in its cradle. With it expired the hopes of including other powers in the "counter-coalition". The other, third, factor in the downfall of this ambitious diplomatic enterprise was the diplomatic mission to England of John Jay, chief justice of the United States.

In the spring of 1794, without the ministry in London being immediately aware of it, owing to the tardiness of winter mail, British-

<sup>21</sup> Treaty of Mutual Defense, Liberty, Security and Commerce, March 27, 1794. F. O., ser. 115, vol. 3; *Annual Register*, 1794, pp. 238-239.

<sup>22</sup> "You will observe that time is given the belligerent Powers for repentance and amendment, before any hostile act of resentment by the contracting parties. You will observe, also, that the period specified is sufficient to permit the arrestation of all supplies shipped for this country [France] during the present season. Thus the next autumn and winter are left clear for negotiation, *should the allies be unsuccessful in this campaign.*" Morris to Randolph, Sainport, May 31, 1794. *Am. State Pap., For. Rel.*, I. 409.

<sup>23</sup> Grouvelle à Deforgues, no. 30, Copenhagen, March 28, 1794. Arch. Aff. Étrang., Dannemarck, vol. 70.

<sup>24</sup> "Rapport", etc., *supra*. Arch. Aff. Étrang., Suède, vol. 286, pp. 224-227.

<sup>25</sup> See long and interesting despatch of Grouvelle au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Copenhagen, February 18, 1794. Arch. Aff. Étrang., Dannemarck, vol. 170, p. 55.

American relations had reached a critical stage. The crisis had been brought about by the several familiar disputes between England and America that in March had suddenly ripened to an ominous condition. First were the old disputes about the northern frontier posts on American soil. British troops still held these strategic points under the ostensible but not real excuse<sup>26</sup> that the United States had first violated the treaty by obstructing the collection of ante-bellum debts to English merchants. With these stood the legacy of minor disputes also left by the treaty. Secondly, there was the disappointment of the American government at not being able to conclude a commercial treaty with Great Britain, whose navigation laws struck sharply at the now independent states, particularly by excluding their ships from the British West Indies. England at first had been quite content to "sit still" in the agreeable commercial *status quo*, since American trade still ran in old colonial channels to English wharves;<sup>27</sup> but this commercial situation, so undesirable to the United States, led to American tariff and tonnage duties in favor of American vessels.<sup>28</sup> This bore particularly hard on British trade, because the traffic with England constituted three-fourths of all American commerce and over half of this three-fourths was carried in British ships.<sup>29</sup> A strong movement, developing in Congress and the administration, under the leadership of Madison and Jefferson, to discriminate specifically against the British flag, had only been checked by a sudden decision to establish a permanent British legation in Philadelphia headed by George Hammond, first British

<sup>26</sup> This statement is based on a careful reading of the Canadian correspondence in Ottawa and London, which shows that orders were actually sent to General Haldimand to hold the posts before the very convenient and plausible excuse of American violations of the treaty was discovered. The evidence is too long to be quoted in detail here. Particularly illuminating, however, is the despatch of Sydney to Haldimand, April 8, 1784 (Canadian Archives, Q 23, 55), sent before the formal exchange of ratifications of the definitive treaty. It should be read in connection with Grenville's argument as stated in Jay to Randolph, London, September 13, 1794. *Am. State Pap., For. Rel.*, I, 485-496. See also Channing, *History of the United States*, IV, 148-149, for an illuminating note.

<sup>27</sup> Sheffield, *Observations on the Commerce of the American States* (1784, sixth ed.), p. 161; Report of the Privy Council on American Trade, January 28, 1791, in *Collection of Important Papers on Navigation and Trade* (London, 1808), p. 114.

<sup>28</sup> Acts of July 4, July 20, 1789; June 20, August 10, 1790. *U. S. Statutes at Large*, I, 27, 180, 335.

<sup>29</sup> The proportion which American commerce to Great Britain bore to the total is ascertained by a comparison of American exports and imports as stated annually from 1790 in *Am. State Pap., Commerce and Navigation*, vol. I. For figures for tonnage see: *Collection of Interesting and Important Papers on Navigation and Trade* (London, 1808), app. XXIV.

minister to the United States.<sup>30</sup> Soon it became evident that Hammond had no instructions to sign a commercial treaty and that he was trying to couple the evacuation of the frontier posts with the establishment of a "neutral" Indian barrier state that would keep the natives of the great American hinterland north of the Ohio in a British sphere of influence, economic and political. The negotiations as to the border fell into abeyance, and when frontier friction between British officers and "British" Indians, and the Americans, had worked disastrously on the self-control of Lord Dorchester, governor-general of Canada, the latter made his notorious and bellicose secret speech to a delegation of Indian tribes, February 10, 1794, in which he prophesied an immediate war with the Americans and sought the alliance of the tomahawk.<sup>31</sup> Intelligence of this unwary utterance soon leaked out. It reached Philadelphia almost simultaneously with the arrival of news from the West Indies of the capture of about three hundred American schooners under the wholly arbitrary Order in Council of November 6, 1793, and the barbarous incarceration of their crews and officers.

In late March and April the majority of the American people were for war with Great Britain. The crystallizing "Democratic" party, under the leadership of Madison and the now retired Jefferson, passed an embargo for a month, soon extended for another thirty days, on all shipping in American harbors. Bills for actual sequestration of British property and vigorous discrimination against the British flag specifically, immediately received strong support in Congress. The movement was headed off by Alexander Hamilton, profound leader of the Federalist party, that had formed in contradistinction to the "Democrats" (the division in 1794 was chiefly over the British policy). In a war with England at that particular time, the Federalists forecasted the total collapse of the new government under the Constitution. The new political system, brought into practical operation by Hamilton's genius in establishing American credit, depended for revenues almost wholly on the tariff and tonnage duties collected in American ports. Almost alone this financial means upheld the credit of the federal and the assumed state debts and paid the operating expenses of the government itself.

<sup>30</sup> See Beckwith to Grenville, March 3, 1791, R. O., F. O., ser. 4, vol. 12; P. Colquhoun to Grenville, August 5, 1791, *Dropmore Papers*, II. 157; Beckwith to Grenville, Philadelphia, July 31, 1791, R. O., F. O., ser. 4, vol. 12; Colquhoun to Grenville, July 29, 1791, *Dropmore Papers*, II. 145; *Can. Arch. Report*, 1890, p. 172.

<sup>31</sup> For copy of speech see *Annual Register*, 1794, pp. 250-251; also *Can. Arch.*, Q 64, 109.

By war, suddenly to eliminate three-fourths of American commerce and to endanger the rest to the point of extinction meant to knock away the scaffolding of credit from beneath the new government, and so to precipitate its destruction. A lapse into the pitiful political helplessness of the Confederation would be then inevitable. To avoid this, Hamilton, in close and quiet intimacy with Hammond, used that connection, in a sort of "back-stairs" diplomacy,<sup>32</sup> to thwart the official anti-Anglican character of the negotiations of the Secretary of State, Jefferson. With a group of Federalist senators<sup>33</sup> he now had sufficient influence in the administration to bring about the appointment of Chief Justice John Jay for the peace mission of 1794. In Congress he marshalled sufficient power to block the retaliatory and hostile measures until the results of Jay's mission should be known. Meanwhile the Federalists with vigor supported a bill for raising an army, and Hamilton led the British minister to believe that if Jay did not succeed in getting a certain minimum of moderate concessions, which he outlined in private to him, the existing peaceful relations with England could not endure.<sup>34</sup>

At the very moment when the Danish-Swedish convention of March 27, 1794, was signed, this ominous American war-cloud was rising on the other side of the Atlantic. Meanwhile the solidity of the First Coalition was beginning to weaken. Secret agents of the British Foreign Office were reporting that France was seeking to detach Spain by approaches through neutral Denmark.<sup>35</sup> As a matter of fact, the Spanish minister in Copenhagen did have instructions to make overtures looking toward peace.<sup>36</sup> Simultaneously, in view of the greater allurements of the Polish spoil, Prussia's influence on the Rhine was weakening. Among the allies "there was far more of disunion than union".<sup>37</sup>

Though the Swedish-Danish convention had been ratified in secret, and its negotiation was supposed to have been kept in the same secrecy, the whole train of Franco-Scandinavian diplomacy was well and with a fair degree of accuracy known to Lord Grenville. The increasing naval armaments of Denmark had for some time excited the suspicion of his representative in Copenhagen,

<sup>32</sup> See evidence cited above, note 7.

<sup>33</sup> King, *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I. 516.

<sup>34</sup> Hammond to Grenville (no. 15), Philadelphia, April 17, 1794. F. O., ser. 5, vol. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Précis of Secret Intelligence from Copenhagen. F. O., Holland, ser. 37, vol. 36.

<sup>36</sup> Grouvelle Correspondence, Arch. Aff. Étrang., Dannemarc, vols. 169 and 170.

<sup>37</sup> J. H. Rose, *William Pitt and the Great War*, p. 204.

though Count von Bernstorff had strongly denied any connection with France,<sup>38</sup> and at Stockholm express assurances were made that no arrangements with Denmark were contemplated.<sup>39</sup> Grouvelle, who was more privy to the chancellor than any other foreigner, was imprudent enough to send his despatches to Paris by ordinary mail, with only parts of them in cipher—a lack of caution wholly inexcusable, for which he was later roundly censured by the Committee of Public Safety.<sup>40</sup> It was so reckless a procedure as almost to prick the investigator's suspicions as to Grouvelle himself. Spies read nearly all of his correspondence. A concise précis of it is preserved at the British Record Office<sup>41</sup> and tallies perfectly with the original despatches in the library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Paris. They knew the content of Grouvelle's despatches at Downing Street almost as soon as at the Quai d'Orsay.

The Swedish minister in London was Laurent von Engeström. He informed Thomas Pinckney, American representative there, on April 28, 1794, that he had instructions not only to communicate a copy of the convention but to invite the accession of the United States to it. Pinckney seemed greatly pleased. He secured a statement to that effect in writing and sent it home the very day. It would be received "with open arms", Engeström understood him to believe.<sup>42</sup> The same day, the Swedish and Danish ministers, "lest their sincerity be suspected",<sup>43</sup> gave a copy of the convention to Lord Grenville. Though nothing was divulged of the overture to Pinckney, Grenville, through the intercepted Grouvelle despatches, soon learned of it by the same means by which he had already known of the convention itself. Immediately he instructed Hammond, at Philadelphia, to make the utmost exertions to prevent the success of any such proposal. To the American "ministers" he must confi-

<sup>38</sup> D. Hailes (British chargé d'affaires at Copenhagen) to Grenville, Copenhagen, March 24, 1794, cipher, rec'd April 3, 1794. F. O., Denmark, ser. 22, vol. 18.

<sup>39</sup> H. G. Spencer (British minister to Sweden) to Grenville, Stockholm, April 18, 1794, cipher, F. O., Sweden, ser. 73, vol. 17; same to same, Stockholm, April 18, 1794, cipher, *ibid*.

<sup>40</sup> Commissionnaire des Affaires Étrangères (Buchot) à Grouvelle, Paris, 4 Prairial, an II. Arch. Aff. Étrang., Dannemarcq, vol. 170, p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Précis of Secret Intelligence from Copenhagen. F. O., Holland, ser. 37, vol. 56.

<sup>42</sup> Engeström to the Royal Chancellor (Frederick Sparre), London, April 29, 1794. Swedish Royal Archives, Anglica, Engeström's Despatches. For transcriptions of such Swedish documents as are cited here, I am indebted to Dr. Lydia Wahlström, of Stockholm.

<sup>43</sup> Engeström to Erenheim (Swedish minister, Copenhagen), May 26, 1794. *Ibid*.

dently emphasize the marked difference in circumstances between the position of the United States and the Baltic Powers, laying stress on the point that in return for fair neutrality on the part of the United States, American commerce had been treated in a spirit of fairness (this was written before Grenville had heard of the exploding American wrath against the British naval policy). The American government, wrote Grenville, must be aware of the risks of being drawn into a conflict with England, especially in view of the weak state of the Scandinavian navy.<sup>44</sup> Three weeks later, on June 5, Grenville informed Hammond that he had reason to believe that the Swedish proposal to America had not the sanction of the Danish court, but he urged the closest attention to the matter. It was true that the Engeström note to Pinckney did not have the support of Denmark. Grenville learned this through Grouvelle's despatches. Shortly after it had been made, Engeström received instructions that Denmark had not acquiesced in the *démarche*, and that any American answer must be considered merely *ad referendum*.<sup>45</sup> Bernstorff's reason for declining to join the invitation—this was still before the news of the British-American crisis was known in Europe—was that he considered the American navy wholly too feeble to co-operate effectively;<sup>46</sup> really the reason was that too much of this adventurous policy on his part would probably result in a quick offensive by the English or Russian fleet, then parading the Baltic<sup>47</sup>—the lot of Holland in 1780 and the fate of Denmark in 1800.

One of the most interesting aspects of British-American diplomacy in this period lies in the relations of time and distance and the precarious schedule of packet-boats. In the days when neither cable nor wireless telegraph existed, the international situation of the world did not vary like a stockbroker's ribbon as the telegraph clicks off each detail of news from the governments of Christendom and other governments; the most important transatlantic intelligence was often long delayed, and often when news finally arrived it came in big consignments instead of in daily dribbles. Such was the case in the crisis of 1794. Up till June 10, after the American commissioner, Jay, had actually set foot on English soil, Grenville had not

<sup>44</sup> Grenville to Hammond, Downing Street, May 14, 1794 (no. 12), cipher. F. O., ser. 5, vol. 5.

<sup>45</sup> The Royal Chancellor (Sparre) to Engeström, Stockholm, May 16, 1794. Swedish Royal Archives, Anglica (1794).

<sup>46</sup> Grouvelle to Buchot (minister of foreign affairs), no. 41, 9 Prairial, an II. (May 29, 1794). Arch. Aff. Étrang., Dannemarck, vols. 170, 180.

<sup>47</sup> Erenheim to Engeström, Copenhagen, July 8, 1794. Swedish Royal Archives, Anglica (1794).

received an official word about the critical American situation.<sup>48</sup> On that day, June 10, a great deal of surprising news from North America lay on the desks of the foreign and home secretaries when the despatches from the Canadian and American mail-packets were opened. American indignation over the captures made under the additional and unprecedented Order in Council of November 6, 1793,<sup>49</sup> Dorchester's speech of February 10 to the Indians, the news of imminent hostilities on the frontier,<sup>50</sup> the embargo, the sequestration and non-intercourse bills, the resolution to send Jay, the sober interview between Hamilton and Hammond, the real and actual imminence of war with America—with America, the source of British naval supplies and the largest single customer for British manufactures—made up a budget of information that gave the Secretary for Foreign Affairs considerable pause and food for thought as on the same morning he unsealed a letter from Falmouth bearing the signature of John Jay, and announcing his commission from the President as special envoy to His Majesty.

The news was a complete surprise; up to this time Grenville had dealt with the United States in a leisurely fashion; there had been little uneasiness at Downing Street over the American situation. Now it was apparent, suddenly, that this confidence was wholly misplaced.

In addition to the information received by way of the intercepted French despatches, Grenville was receiving other secret reports, false indeed, which made the Scandinavian-American possibilities seem more alarming. On June 20, the day of the first conference between Jay and Grenville, came a letter from the British chargé at Berlin, telling of an interview with Count Finckenstein, the famous Prussian minister of foreign affairs, in which the dubious disposition of America had been discussed. Finckenstein confided some American information that, in view of Jefferson's resignation as secretary of state and retirement on January 1, 1794, to Monticello, was as weirdly fantastic as it must have been startling to Grenville. Jefferson, said the Prussian count, was expected soon in Denmark, there to concert measures that should be followed by the neutral nations.<sup>51</sup> Strangely enough, the Danish chancellor also had

<sup>48</sup> Hammond to Grenville, February 20, April 17, May 1, 1794, F. O., ser. 5, vol. 4; Grenville to Hammond, June 5, 1794, cipher, F. O., ser. 115, vol. 3.

<sup>49</sup> To "stop and detain all ships laden with goods the produce of any colony belonging to France, or carrying provisions or other supplies for the use of any such colony, and should bring the same, with their cargoes, for legal adjudication in our courts of admiralty". *Am. State Pap., For. Rel.*, I. 430.

<sup>50</sup> Dorchester to Dundas, February 24, 1794. *Can. Arch.*, Q 67, 88.

<sup>51</sup> G. H. Rose to Grenville, Berlin, June 10, 1794, rec'd June 20. F. O., Prussia, ser. 64, vol. 29.

a similar notion.<sup>52</sup> A few days later came a letter from Hammond, of May 25, telling of the increasing hostility of the American public due to the news of the occupation of the old Miami fort<sup>53</sup> by British troops, and enclosing the acrid correspondence between himself and Randolph, Jefferson's Francophil successor.

As if this were not enough, there arrived, at very near this time, one of the curious Francis Drake bulletins, which purported to transmit secret copies of the minutes of the meetings of the Committee of Public Safety, but were really literary productions meant to be perused by and designed to mislead the British Foreign Office.<sup>54</sup> Whether Grenville was wholly duped by these inventions is uncertain, but he expressly asked Drake to get him information about French negotiations with Sweden and Denmark. The "secret" information which Drake furnished professed to relate that in the Committee of Public Safety despatches had been read from its American agents, under date of April 1, which declared war between the United States and Great Britain inevitable, and stated that immediately afterward a treaty would be concluded between the former and Denmark and Sweden. The French commissioners in America were represented as having requested power to conclude preliminaries of a treaty with the United States and to guarantee Congress that the Convention would not treat with the Northern Powers without admitting

<sup>52</sup> Grouvelle au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Copenhagen, 22 Prairial, an II. (June 11, 1794). Arch. Aff. Étrang., Dannemarck, vol. 170, p. 192. The present writer has not been able wholly to run down the source of this rumor.

<sup>53</sup> Near the city of Toledo, Ohio.

<sup>54</sup> The validity of the Drake despatches was first discredited by Mr. J. H. Clapham (*English Historical Review*, January, 1897) and by Professor A. Aulard (*Révolution Française*, 1897, vol. XXXII.) on the ground that they do not agree with certain well-established facts in the sources for the history of the Committee of Public Safety. This opinion rested unchallenged until 1914, when M. Albert Mathiez presented an article in defense of the documents, citing sources with which to him they appear to agree ("Histoire Secrète du Comité de Salut Public", *Revue des Questions Historiques*, January, 1914). Without being wholly familiar with the sources for the Committee of Public Safety, the writer was soon convinced, by collating the despatches from Grouvelle from Copenhagen (whence the committee got its information), those from the French commissioners in Philadelphia to the Committee of Public Safety, and the despatches of Gouverneur Morris, American minister to France, that the Drake information was not true. Very cleverly, just enough truth is put into the despatches to make them deceiving. For documents see: Turner, "Correspondence of the French Ministers", Am. Hist. Assoc., *Ann. Rept.*, 1903, vol. II.; Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, États-Unis, vols. 40-43, 1793, 1794; and Dannemarck, vols. 169, 170, 1793, 1794; *Am. State Pap., For. Rel.*, vol. I., and published works of G. Morris, edited by A. C. Morris (1889) and J. Sparks (1832).

the United States to any treaty made by them.<sup>55</sup> This last request was said to have been rejected, but the executive was authorized to negotiate with Morris, the American minister, and to report. It was also stated that letters from Stockholm of May 11 represented that court as ready to ratify a treaty with the French republic.<sup>56</sup>

In short, the British ministry in the summer of 1794 stood confronted with all the dangers of the revival of the old Armed Neutrality at a time when—despite the Prussian treaty of April, 1794—the coalition against France was already weakening<sup>57</sup> toward the final disintegration of 1795. One exception there was to the situation of 1781: Pitt could count on Catherine the Great to join Britain against the Baltic Powers;<sup>58</sup> and Prussia, now a nominal ally of Great Britain<sup>59</sup> and absorbed in the Polish partition, had no inclination again to become a member of the Baltic combination. But there can be no doubt that the Baltic situation as viewed by the British ministry in June and July, 1794, had an appreciable effect on the American negotiations: it would be folly to allow the United States, the greatest foreign customer of Great Britain,<sup>60</sup> at a time when commerce and the entrepôt system were providing the revenue for the French war,<sup>61</sup> to join in a war against England, or in any such system as the policy of the Northern Powers, greased by French diplomacy, seemed to invite. It would serve to divide the energies and diminish the supplies of the British navy, and to weaken the financial sinews of the government in its great struggle with France. Great Britain desired war no more than did the American Federalists. The time had come for some kind of immediate settlement with the United States.

Grenville took immediate steps to relieve the American tension. Concessions were made which postponed all immediate danger from America and looked toward a conciliatory negotiation. The old policy of procrastinating at the frontier posts until a "neutral" Indian barrier state had been created was abandoned and arrangements made to step across the line to Canadian soil, in the event of a treaty.

<sup>55</sup> Bulletin no. 25, Despatches of Francis Drake. *Dropmore Papers*, II. 578. The writer has been unable to find any despatch of April 1 in the French archives, or anything resembling it.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> Rose, *William Pitt and the Great War*, ch. VIII.

<sup>58</sup> Prussia's treaty of alliance with Great Britain of 1793 provided for measures to induce neutral powers to adopt a harassing attitude toward French commerce.

<sup>59</sup> Whitworth to Grenville, St. Petersburg, April 15, 22, 23, 1794. F. O., Russia, ser. 65, vol. 27.

<sup>60</sup> See Chatham Papers, bdle. 286, R. O., cited above.

<sup>61</sup> Mahan, *Sea Power and French Revolution*, II. 18.

For his hostile speech to the Indians, a sharp reprimand to Dorchester followed, accompanied by concise instructions to use every means to cultivate a friendly disposition on the part of the United States.<sup>62</sup> In case hostilities had already broken out between frontier units of American and British forces, Grenville and Jay agreed that everything should remain *in statu quo* pending the negotiations.<sup>63</sup> The king issued an Order in Council admitting all the American captures made in the West Indies to appeal in English prize courts from the petty and arbitrary admiralty courts of the islands.<sup>64</sup> By this all that Hamilton had stipulated to Hammond, on the eve of Jay's departure, as "absolutely indispensable for an amicable settlement of differences",<sup>65</sup> was granted, and the door opened to a settlement of all points in dispute between the two nations. Grenville even went a step further. The Order in Council of June 8, 1793 (that of November 6 had been altered already in January to the sense of June 8), was unostentatiously repealed in so far as it directed the capture and pre-emption of neutral grain-ships bound for France.<sup>66</sup>

From August till November the negotiations between Jay and Grenville went on in leisurely discussion. The main principles necessary for a treaty had been agreed on when the British concessions were made and when Jay had consented to a commission for the adjudication of debts due to British creditors, and for settling the question of French prizes sold in American waters after Washington's prohibition of their sale. Grenville's bargaining after this was very sharp. He attenuated his chaffering until he could hear from Hammond precisely the position of the American administration as to the Baltic Powers.

In Jay's official instructions, made familiar by the publication for the Senate of part of the Jay negotiations, was the following paragraph:

You will have no difficulty in gaining access to the ministers of Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, at the Court of London. The principles of the armed neutrality would abundantly cover our neutral rights. If, therefore, the situation of things with respect to Great Britain should

<sup>62</sup> This led eventually to Dorchester's resignation. Dorchester to Dundas, Quebec, September 4, 1794. Can. Arch., Q 69-1, p. 176.

<sup>63</sup> Jay to Randolph, London, July 12, 1794, *Am. State Pap., For. Rel.*, I. 479; Grenville to Hammond, July 15, 1794, F. O., ser. 115, vol. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Orders in Council, West Indies and America (1786-1797), R. O.

<sup>65</sup> Hammond to Grenville (no. 15), Philadelphia, April 17, 1794. F. O., 5, 4.

<sup>66</sup> Instructions to Naval Commanders, approved by the Privy Council, August 6, 1794, R. O., Colonial Office 5: 33; Orders in Council, West Indies to America, 1786-1797, Privy Council Register, vol. 141, p. 11.

dictate the necessity of taking the precaution of foreign co-operation upon this head; if no prospect of accommodation should be thwarted by the danger of such a measure being known to the British court; and if an entire view of all our political relations shall, in your judgment, permit the step, you will sound those ministers upon the probability of an alliance with their nations to support those principles.<sup>67</sup>

Randolph wrote this paragraph. But Jay assumed a slightly patronizing tone toward an official superior who was really of inferior political stature,<sup>68</sup> and paid attention to the formal instructions of the Secretary of State only when convenient. That Jay might of necessity waive the principle of the armed neutrality, even to the extent of acquiescing in the Order of June 8, was admitted in Hamilton's private letter to him.<sup>69</sup> Hamilton later states his disapproval of any diplomatic union with the Baltic Powers.

At first Jay was intimate with the Danish and Swedish ministers at London. But it soon became their policy to "let him take his way" without making any definite assurances.<sup>70</sup> Denmark was threatened by the Russian fleet patrolling the Baltic. Sweden had to guard its Finnish and Pomeranian frontiers. There was also the English fleet which five years later worked such havoc at Copenhagen. The Armed Neutrality of 1794 was a threat rather than an immediate direct force. Only if political circumstances were opportune did it allow actual reprisals and the closure of the Baltic. Engeström's correspondence with Stockholm shows that while Swedish diplomats considered more initiative advisable as to the United States, the Danish chancellor hesitated. He thought that, if no agreement were reached by Jay with the British court, the Americans would fall naturally into the arms of the Scandinavians and an enlarged armed neutrality, and then would come the best time for real negotiations with them. If a treaty were concluded and concessions were made to the United States not allowed to other neutrals, it would be almost equivalent to a declaration of war by England on Denmark and Sweden.<sup>71</sup> Whatever may have been the conferences with the Scandinavians, of which not a word was ever made known in the official correspondence turned over to the Amer-

<sup>67</sup> Instructions to Jay, May 6, 1794. *Am. State Pap., For. Rel.*, I. 473. This was before any news of the Engeström overture to Pinckney could have reached America, and was a mere conjecture of a possible diplomatic lever. Randolph's ignorance of the real state of European politics is shown by his allusion to Russia, then the maritime ally of England.

<sup>68</sup> Jay to Randolph, July 30, 1794. *Am. State Pap., For. Rel.*, I. 480.

<sup>69</sup> Hamilton to Jay, May 6, 1794. *Hamilton, Works*, IV. 551.

<sup>70</sup> Engeström to the Royal Chancellor (Sparre), August 12, 1794. Swedish Royal Archives, Anglica (1794).

<sup>71</sup> Erenheim to Engeström, Copenhagen, July 8, 1794. *Ibid.*

ican Senate, Jay by August had turned aside from such cordiality.<sup>72</sup> This was after the first conciliatory concessions had been made to him by the British negotiator. One wonders whether the Federalists could have later put the Jay Treaty through the Senate if *all* the correspondence had been published!

Before Grenville learned from Hammond the real attitude of the American government toward armed neutrality, he was on the point of making much greater concessions in the proposed American treaty than were eventually considered. On September 30, 1794, Jay submitted a draft which, he believed, incorporated most of the principles on which previous conferences had led him to expect agreement. No copy of this draft was conveyed to the Senate with the other drafts and projects of the negotiations turned over to it at the time when the treaty came up for ratification. One can guess the reason. This draft—more important than all the preliminary projects—was not included in the Jay correspondence, and probably was never even read by anyone on this side of the Atlantic,<sup>73</sup> because it compared too unfavorably with the terms of the final treaty itself. A copy, however, is in the British Record Office.<sup>74</sup>

There is no space here to enumerate the favorable terms of the draft of September 30. They were never agreed to because, ten days previously, Grenville had heard from Hammond that Alexander Hamilton said the United States would never accede to the Scandinavian convention. Hammond reported that Hamilton said

with great seriousness and with every demonstration of sincerity . . . that it was the settled policy of this government in every contingency, even in that of an open contest with Great Britain, to avoid entangling itself with European connections, which would only tend to involve this country where it might have no possible interest, and connect it to a common cause with allies, from whom, in the moment of danger, it could derive no succor. . . . In support of this policy Mr. Hamilton urged many of the arguments advanced in your lordship's despatch, the dissimilitude between the political views as well as between general interests of the United States and those of the Baltic Powers, and the inefficiency of the latter, from their enfeebled condition, either to protect the navigation of the former in Europe or to afford it any active assistance if necessary in its own territory.

Hammond could not find out whether the supposed Swedish propositions had arrived from Pinckney, but from Hamilton's decided man-

<sup>72</sup> Engeström to the Royal Chancellor (Sparre), August 12, 1794. Swedish Royal Archives, Anglica (1794).

<sup>73</sup> It is not included among the duplicates of Jay's correspondence in the Jay manuscripts in the New York Historical Society's collections, nor, of course, in the published *Works* of Jay.

<sup>74</sup> F. O., misc. ser. 95, vol. 512.

ner he believed that the matter had received his attention before, and that what he had stated represented the deliberations of himself and of the American administration.<sup>75</sup> That the Swedish proposal was received with no enthusiasm is indicated by Hamilton's letter of July 8, to Randolph, quoted in his works.<sup>76</sup>

The result of this information in the hands of Grenville was to reduce all his fear of American co-operation with the Baltic Powers. With the latest news from Philadelphia in mind, no reason any longer existed why Grenville should submit to Jay's propositions of maritime law, and, so that the Americans were mollified sufficiently to prevent hostilities or injurious commercial legislation, there was no longer any particular occasion for hurry. Jay, on the other hand, feared that some unforeseen contingency in the maelstrom of European policy might derange the attitude of the British ministry toward the United States. The only concession Grenville would now make was to agree to a joint survey and settlement by commission of the unknown northwestern boundary. The other new points of Jay's draft he deemed "insurmountable obstacles".

Convinced that he could get no better terms and that on the whole those he had were satisfactory, the American envoy signed the treaty which has since been connected with his name. The articles, long familiar in American history, were a triumph of British diplomacy. The only concessions made were the evacuation of the posts, which Grenville had before decided on in order to prevent a disruption of the valuable British-American trade;<sup>77</sup> the admission of American vessels, during the war only, to a direct West Indian trade, which the conditions of war had rendered it impracticable for British ships adequately to maintain;<sup>78</sup> and compensation for captures "made under cover" of the arbitrary Orders in Council, without

<sup>75</sup> Hammond to Grenville, no. 28, New York, August 3, 1794, rec'd September 20. F. O., ser. 5, vol. 5. That the matter had received discussion, probably in the Cabinet, is indicated by Hamilton's letter of July 8, 1794 (at about the time the Engeström proposal would have been received in America): "The United States have peculiar advantages from situation, which would thereby be thrown into common stock without an equivalent. The United States had better stand in its own ground."

<sup>76</sup> "If a war, on the question of Neutral Rights, should take place, common interest would secure all the co-operation which is practical and occasional arrangements may be made; what has already been done in this respect appears to be sufficient." Hamilton to Randolph, Philadelphia, July 8, 1794. Hamilton, *Works*, IV. 571.

<sup>77</sup> Consideration on suggestions proposed for the Government of Upper and Lower Canada. R. O., C. O., ser. 42, vol. 88, pp. 575-579.

<sup>78</sup> Mahan, *Sea Power and French Revolution*, II. 258. This article was not ratified by the Senate.

giving up the principle of those orders. The price paid by the Federalists was, to make, by abeyance, a heavy though a regrettably necessary sacrifice of principle in the face of other national interests. Only one real advantage was secured—the evacuation of the frontier posts and the clearance of the last vestige of British control from the soil of the United States. By means of a mixed commission to compensate for spoliation “under cover” of the Orders in Council, Pitt secured from America a peaceable acquiescence in British naval policy that reversed completely the position taken by the young republic in all its previous treaties.<sup>79</sup>

The episode of the abortive renewal in 1794 of the Armed Neutrality and the relations of the United States to it are interesting in two ways. The decision of Hamilton, who in 1794 preponderated in the councils of Washington, not to participate in a European combination, marks the first definite acceptance by the government of the United States of the principle of abstention from foreign entanglements. Though the idea of such a policy may not have been wholly original with Hamilton, it was he who first gave it practical application. It was the proposal of the Scandinavians in the world war of the French Revolution that offered a chance for such a decision, and on the basis of Hamilton’s reasoning the new government’s policy was first actually oriented in that direction.<sup>80</sup> Two years later it was publicly restated in Washington’s Farewell Address, as an American policy of abstention from foreign entanglements; Hamilton’s verbal coinage of 1794 was there repeated. In

<sup>79</sup> If the principle of the rule of 1756 was not recognized, it was consented to tacitly—a voluntary relaxation from it having been made, so far as the trade between the United States and the French islands was concerned, by the repeal of the Order of November 6, 1793. Restrictions on American exportations of stipulated West Indian products, of which the voyage had been broken by landing on American soil, would have cut off the carriage of French colonial products, had the article been ratified by the Senate. There was no agreement on the question of food-stuffs as contraband, which the United States was bound by treaties with France, Sweden, and Holland to treat as non-contraband; the practice of Great Britain, who controlled the sea, in pre-empting food-stuffs bound for France was allowed by not being prohibited. In fact, Grenville stated that the treaty was a specific recognition of the British principle in this respect, when a little later the American government questioned additional instructions to British naval commanders of April 25, 1795, to detain all ships laden with provision for France. (Grenville to Bond—chargé d’affaires at Philadelphia after Hammond’s departure—November 4, 1795, enclosing copy of the instructions, F. O., 115, 4). The principles of free ships, free goods, and the immunity of naval stores from seizure as contraband were wholly lost sight of.

<sup>80</sup> The idea, itself, that abstention from European alliances was advisable had occurred to other American political thinkers before Hamilton first put it into operation. See Hart, *Monroe Doctrine*, pp. 9–10.

this sense, Alexander Hamilton was the author of one-half of the Monroe Doctrine, just as nearly thirty years later John Quincy Adams was the author of the other half.

Again, the episode has its interest from the ambitious Franco-Scandinavian "neutral counter-coalition", so adventurously constructed in the imagination of French diplomatists. Though the lack of French subsidies to Sweden prevented that power from arming more actively in concert with Denmark against the preponderating naval power of England and Russia, the Jay Treaty administered the final blow to this daring diplomatic conception. Bernstorff constantly insisted to Grouvelle,<sup>81</sup> while the Jay negotiations were proceeding, that it was the intention of the northern allies jointly to invite the accession of the United States. But that was not done, and meanwhile the treaty was signed. "The agreement by which the American agent, Jay, has just terminated the disputes between England and America", wrote Grouvelle from Copenhagen to the Committee of Public Safety after the treaty became known there, "breaks absolutely this *liaison*" (*i. e.*, a possible Scandinavian-American *liaison*).<sup>82</sup> The French design for another armed neutrality quickly expired as the United States, under the guiding reason of Hamilton, acquiesced in the *real* facts of British sea power.

SAMUEL FLAGG BEMIS.

<sup>81</sup> Grouvelle au Ministre (des Affaires Étrangères), no. 50, Copenhagen, 27 Messidor, an II. Arch. Aff. Étrang., Dannemarck, vol. 170, p. 232.

<sup>82</sup> Grouvelle aux Membres du Comité de Salut Public, Déchiffrement, Copenhagen, 3 Nivôse, an III. *Ibid.*, p. 359.